

Rogers Asks Delay in Any MIRV Debate

Secretary of State William P. Rogers asked members of the Senate yesterday to hold off any debate on postponing multiple nuclear weapons tests, because U.S.-Soviet talks begin Nov. 17.

Rogers said he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, behind closed doors, "I don't think it would be helpful to have further discussions on MIRV (multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicles) now."

Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) said it is now up to the committee to decide whether to push ahead for a Senate debate. "He didn't talk us out of it," said Fulbright.

Before the committee is a resolution introduced by Sen. Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass.) with 42 bipartisan sponsors. It asks the President to "urgently propose to the Russian government" a suspension of tests of the multiple warhead missile.

Earlier yesterday, Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) appealed "unilateral suspension of testing of multiple warheads" by the United States. This could be a "useful initiative" now, said Muskie as the "first step" for the forthcoming American-Soviet talks, due to start in Helsinki.

Testing on MIRV is reportedly due to be completed by May, Muskie noted in a television interview "Today—NBC". "Once we've completed our testing," he said, "the Russians obviously will feel they must complete theirs until they've developed the MIRV... then the possibility of reaching agreement on the use of this weapon is almost zero."

In reply to Vice President Agnew's charge that Muskie's proposal amounts to playing "Russian roulette" with American security, Muskie countered that the reverse is true.

"The development of ever more complex and costly nuclear weapons is itself a form of Russian roulette," he said. "What I'm trying to do is to stop that roulette wheel from turning."

In 1963, said Muskie, it was President Kennedy's unilateral suspensions of American nuclear tests in the atmos-

phere that paved the way for the partial nuclear test ban treaty.

Secretary Rogers reassured the Fulbright committee yesterday that there are "no conditions at all" on U.S. agreement to start the new strategic arms talks with the Russians. According to Fulbright, when Rogers was asked how

he reconciles his view with statements yesterday by the Senate and House Republican leaders that the talks have relationship to such subjects as Vietnam and the Middle East, Rogers said the White House only means that the climate of the nuclear talks could be affected by international developments.